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THOUGHTS
ON THE LATE
PROCEEDINGS
OF
GOVERNMENT,
RESPECTING THE
TRADE
OF THE
WEST INDIA ISLANDS
WITH THE
UNITED STATES
OF
NORTH AMERICA.

By BRIAN EDWARDS, Esq.

Quis furor iste novus? quò nunc, quò tenditis, inquit,
Heu miseræcives? non hostem, inimicaque castra
Argivum; vestras spes uritis. VIRG. Lib. 5.

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OF

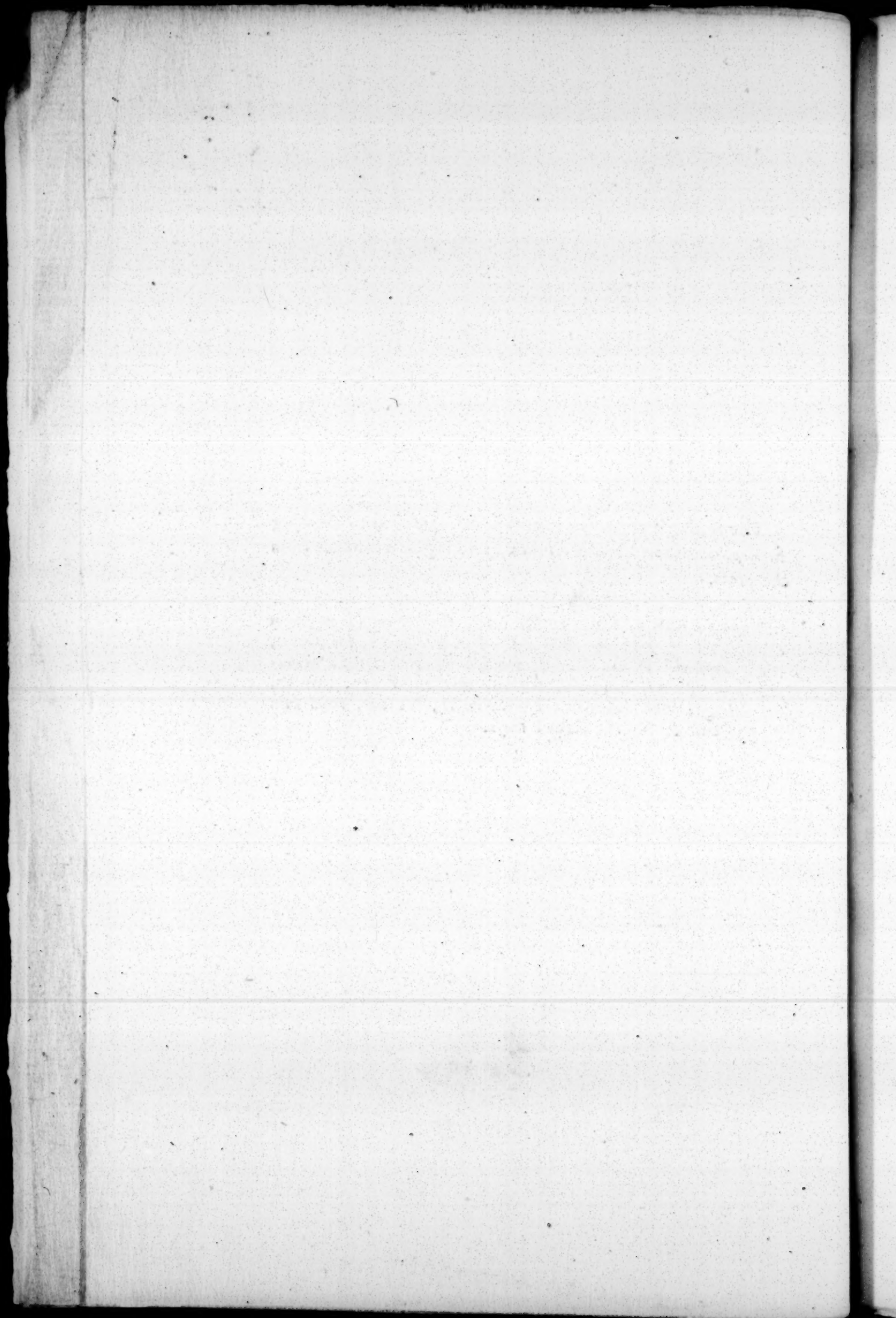
G O V E R N M E N T, &c.

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The reader is requested to excuse and correct the following *Errata*, occasioned by the Author's residing at a distance from the press.

Page 4, line 3, for *to console with*, read *to console ourselves with*. P. 17, line 29, dele *the*. P. 19, line 18, for *supply*, read *supplies*. P. 26, line 8, for *manufactories*, read *manufactures*. P. 31, line 18, for *of*, read *on*. P. 37, line 10, for *interest*, read *interests*. Ibid. line 18, for *our*, read *her*. P. 39, line 6, for *that*, read *those*.



ADVERTISEMENT.

THE most material of the facts stated in this pamphlet, were collected by the author during his residence in the West-Indies, previous to the beginning of the late war. His situation there, afforded him means of information, not always attainable; and he endeavoured to avail himself of it, for a purpose very different from that of a hasty and temporary publication. Some late measures of government, particularly the proclamation of the twenty sixth of December last, renewing among other regulations, the restrictive proclamation of the second of July preceding, induced him, in judging of its propriety, to recur to the materials in his possession; and conceiving that a clear and accurate knowledge of every part of our antient commercial system with America, is at this time

time essentially necessary, he ventures in this manner to submit his thoughts on a very important branch of it, to the wisdom of our ministers, and the judgement of an enlightened publick. Unconnected with party, he writes with the freedom of history: he trusts with impartiality: he hopes without offence. And although he has not the folly to suppose that the name of an undistinguished individual like himself, can add weight to his opinions; yet as he finds it necessary to animadvert on the writings of others who have avowed themselves to the world, he has thought it his duty, as an honest man, to give his name also to the publick.

B. EDWARDS.

Wellbury House, Hants,
10th February, 1784.

T R A D E
BETWEEN
N O R T H A M E R I C A
AND THE
W E S T I N D I E S.

THERE is this essential difference attending the conduct and determinations of private persons, and of persons in power: the mistakes of the former, however gross and dangerous, seldom spread their consequences beyond the individual himself, and the small circle to which he belongs; whereas those of the latter are often co-extensive with the interests of a whole people.—A single error in the councils of a publick minister may involve in it the fate of nations, and the welfare of posterity.—We have all been melancholy witnesses to the truth of this remark; and can bear testimony, from our own remembrance, of the fatal effects that one eminent mistake in the conduct of a great and able statesman has produced: the revolt of
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three millions of our fellow subjects:—The dismemberment of the empire, and a combination of impending dangers, from which death seems our only refuge.

It is not wonderful, therefore, that our late administration with such an example before them, at once a lesson and a terror to the world, should, in a case so unprecedented as the settling a commercial intercourse with our late fellow-subjects, now a great and independent nation, have displayed unusual timidity and caution. That their intentions were good, I have not a doubt; but I think it may be questioned whether the dread of *doing too much*, has not had too powerful an influence on their councils; for in desperate cases temporizing expedients are not always the safest line of conduct. To me, indeed, the governing principle of what *ought to be* the conduct of Great Britain, on the present occasion, appears sufficiently obvious. The basis of every permanent commercial alliance between distant nations is *mutual advantage, founded in mutual confidence*. Surely then it is our interest and our duty to endeavour, by softening animosity, to restore that confidence which we have unhappily lost. Although we cannot retrieve ALL the great benefits which we have wantonly and foolishly thrown from us, let us not, in the peevishness of disappointed ambition neglect the recovery of such as are still within our reach.

By

By an enlarged and liberal policy on our part, passion and prejudice will at length happily subside, and then, and not till then, will interest have its natural bias on the mind of America. Trade will no doubt, in such case, revert in a great degree to its antient channels; and that separation which has rudely torn from the robe of Majesty one of its brightest ornaments, may not ultimately prove so essentially fatal as is now apprehended. Thus(—— allied to us, as they still are, by the dearest ties of consanguinity——) let us hope that the Americans will yet prove themselves, as they have hitherto proved, our best friends and customers in peace, and in war our firmest allies. The propriety of this doctrine, I presume to think, is not less justified by the precepts of christianity, than by the maxims of sound policy and commercial experience.

But we are now assured by men of high rank and great authority, that such generosity is not only unnecessary but dangerous; for that, in spite of American resentment and independency, this kingdom must necessarily possess as much of their commerce as we wish to retain*. If this be indeed the case, what a dreadful monu-

* See the debates in Parliament, March 7, 1783. See also 'Observations on the Commerce of the American States' by Lord Sheffield. The aim of his lordship's pamphlet throughout is to support this doctrine.

ment of human infirmity does Great Britain exhibit to the world ! And what have we to console with, for the millions we have expended, and the blood we have spilt ? we have dismembered the noblest empire in the universe ;—and for what ? *To make assurance sure !*—to possess ourselves of an object already our own, and of which nothing it seems could have deprived us !

I have indeed ever thought and said, and ever shall think and say, that the war with America on the part of Great Britain, was conceived in wickedness, and continued thro' insanity ; but I had hopes, after the discipline we have undergone, that at length we were nearly cured of our delirium ; for we have been blistered and blooded, pumped, purged, and chained to the earth. Nevertheless there are, I am sorry to find, a considerable party in the nation, who appear to me to be still labouring under some *unlucky ascendant* ; for they tell us, that the only method which now remains of improving and extending a commercial intercourse with our late brethren, is to treat them in all respects as a foreign people : to shut our ports against them, as aliens and strangers : to make them sensible, that having renounced the duties, they have renounced also the privileges of British subjects. The Americans, we are gravely assured, will be far from taking such conduct amiss : nay, they will even applaud us for it, and consider
it

it as a convincing proof of our liberality and friendship towards them †.

Fortunately among each of the great parties that are now contending, some for the preservation, and others for the attainment of power; there are a *few* who argue more consistently on the subject. Mr. Burke, with his usual comprehensive discernment, has expressed a generous indignation against all prohibitory systems; and the accomplished minister ‡ in the direction of our finances, brought into parliament || a provisional bill for the re-establishment of a commercial intercourse between this kingdom and America, founded on very beneficial and enlarged principles; and which, had it passed into a law, would, I am persuaded, have tended in its consequences, not to the injury of our trade and navigation, as was apprehended, but, in a very eminent degree, to the support and encouragement of both.

A change of administration taking place soon afterwards, this bill was rejected. Nevertheless, I will not presume hastily to condemn the measure which was adopted in the place of it. I allude to the act which empowers his Majesty in council to regulate the trade with America in such manner as shall be thought most expedient

† Lord Sheffield's observations, p. 2.

‡ Mr. Pitt.

|| March, 1783.

and salutary. It seemed not unreasonable, it must be owned, that some engagement should be required on the part of America, in return for *certain* indulgencies, which she will probably expect from Great Britain; and I take for granted, that considerations of this nature induced parliament to vest a discretionary authority in the privy council; but notwithstanding this display of prudence (perhaps of wisdom) it does not appear that the authority thus intrusted to administration has been productive of any of those beneficial effects which were expected from the exercise of it. One of its first fruits was the proclamation of the second of July; a measure which I venture to pronounce (if it be meant as a permanent regulation) was founded on the grossest misinformation, and is fraught with the most serious consequences:—of the danger of which, however, I firmly believe its advisers had not, nor yet have an adequate conception*.

If

* The proclamation was renewed 26th of December, 1783; yet few men are better acquainted with the true interests of the West-India Islands, the importance of their trade, and their dependance on external support, than the Right Honourable Gentleman § (at that time secretary of state) who supported the act in the House of Commons on which this proclamation is founded. I say this from no other

§ Mr. Fox.

If there ever was one particular system of commerce in the world, that called less for restraint and limitation than any other, it was doubtless the intercourse and reciprocal exchange

other motive than the love of truth; for I am wholly unknown to the Right Honourable Gentleman; but I have frequently, from the gallery of that house, heard him display so rich a fund of correct and most valuable information on those subjects, (as he did particularly on an application of the sugar refiners in February, 1781, for a reduction of the duties on foreign sugar,) as convinces me that on the present occasion (if indeed he advised the proclamation) he has suffered his own most excellent judgement to be biased by that of less enlightened or interested men. As the reader may wish to refer to the proclamation at large, it is hereunto added.

At the Court at St. JAMES's, the 2d. of July, 1783.

P R E S E N T,

The KING's Most Excellent Majesty in Council.

WHEREAS by an Act of Parliament passed this session, intituled, "An act for preventing certain instruments from being required from ships belonging to the United States of America, and to give to his Majesty, for a limited time, certain powers for the better carrying on trade and commerce between the subjects of his Majesty's dominions and the inhabitants of the said United States," it is amongst other things enacted, that during the continuance of the said act, it shall and may be lawful for his Majesty in Council, by order or orders to be issued and published from time to time, to give such directions

change of commodities, which subsisted between our subjects in the West-India Islands, and those of the now United States of North America. It was not a traffick calculated to supply the

tions and to make such regulations with respect to duties, drawbacks or otherwise, for carrying on the trade and commerce between the people and territories belonging to the Crown of Great Britain, and the people and territories of the said United States, as to his Majesty in Council shall appear most expedient and salutary, any law, usage, or custom to the contrary notwithstanding; his Majesty doth therefore, by and with the advice of his privy council, hereby order and direct, that pitch, tar, turpentine, hemp, and flax, masts, yards, and bowsprits, staves, heading, boards, timber, shingles, and all other species of lumber; horses, neat cattle, sheep, hogs, poultry, and all other species of live stock and live provisions; peas, beans, potatoes, wheat, flour, bread, biscuit, rice, oats, barley, and all other species of grain, being the growth or production of any of the United States of America, may (until further order) be imported by British subjects in British-built ships, owned by his Majesty's subjects, and navigated according to law, from any port of the United States of America, to any of his Majesty's West-India Islands; and that rum, sugar, molasses, coffee, cocoa nuts, ginger, and pimento, may, until further order, be exported by British subjects in British-built ships, owned by his Majesty's subjects, and navigated according to law, from any of his Majesty's West-India Islands, to any port or place within the said United States, upon payment of the same duties on exportation, and subject to the like rules, regulations, securities and restrictions, as the same articles by law are or may be subject and liable to, if exported to any British colony

the fantastick calls of vanity, or to administer gratification to luxury or to vice. Its first object was to obtain food for the hungry: to purchase common sustenance for thousands in those islands who must otherwise have unavoidably suffered the miseries of famine. And the second great aim of the planters was, to procure materials for the supply of two capital objects; their buildings, and packages for conveying their staples to Great Britain, from whence alone they are supplied with raiment and other manufactures to an immense amount, for the comfort of life and the support and maintenance of their plantations.—Of the necessity of obtaining materials for the package of their principal commodities, sugar and rum, an idea may be formed from this,—that the quantity of those articles annually shipped to

colony or plantation in America:—and the Right Honourable the Lords Commissioners of his Majesty's Treasury, and the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, are to give the necessary directions herein, as to them may respectively appertain.

Steph. Cottrell."

The act on which this proclamation was founded, expiring the 20th of December, 1783, it has been renewed this present Session, and declared to be in force until the 20th of April, 1784. The reader will observe, that those important articles beef and pork, salted fish, lamp oil, &c. are prohibited altogether from the United States, even in British ships, navigated according to law.

C

Great

Great Britain, exceeds in value the sum of three millions of pounds sterling, and without the means of conveying the same to the British market, the whole of its immense cultivation must stop;—for who will raise, at a great expence, commodities which he can neither consume himself, nor sell to others?

Such being in part the nature, and indeed the absolute necessity of the trade in question, it seems beyond the stretch of human ingenuity to devise a solid reason why the circumstance of American independency should induce Great Britain to object (if America does not) to the continuation of so beneficial an intercourse:—beneficial in the highest degree to Great Britain herself; not to her sugar plantations only:—yet the proclamation before mentioned, by interdicting American ships from a participation therein, is, according to my conception of it, tantamount to, and in effect an absolute prohibition of the trade altogether. Nor is this opinion single and unsupported: the inhabitants of all the British West Indies considered the proclamation in the same light; for it no sooner reached them, than American supplies rose immediately, in consequence of it, three hundred per cent. in price.

It were easy to demonstrate the impossibility of British ships supplying exclusively the sugar islands with American cargoes, except on terms absolutely ruinous either to the merchant who carries

on the trade, or to the planter. To those who are acquainted with the nature and comparative cheapness of American navigation, proof of this is unnecessary; and it is equally unnecessary to those who are not: for in my opinion, the United States will cut the matter short by a reciprocal restriction towards British vessels. That they certainly *will* come to this determination, however, I do not affirm; I only say they *may*: and I think it more than probable, as soon as their present internal disquietudes are sufficiently allayed to permit them to attend to foreign commerce, *that they will*; and I form my opinion on the following circumstances: First, because they well know that Great Britain must in time recede; for America has this advantage in the contest, that sugar and rum, and coffee, and molasses, though very wholesome things, are not, however, like American provisions, absolutely necessary to the preservation of life. Secondly, because if they are not permitted to purchase those commodities from us, in their own way, they can get them elsewhere. The commerce of America, therefore, is beyond all equivalent more necessary to the British West-India Islands, than that of the islands to her. For these reasons Great Britain, as America well knows, must recede *at last*. The misfortune is, that our devoted planters may be furnished before the contest is settled.

Those

Those who contend that the necessities of America will oblige her to send her merchandize to the best market, through any channel, appear to me to judge somewhat hastily of human nature. They take for granted that *interest* has, in all cases, an irresistible influence on human action. I doubt this is not *always* a just conclusion. The bulk of mankind are, I believe, as commonly governed by *passion*. But though on the present occasion, the passions and prejudices of America concur, according to my idea, with her real interest, to induce her to reject the alternative offered by Great Britain, yet it may not be useless to enquire what other nations have done under a similar predicament, and in cases too where evidently it was *not* their interest to retaliate. An instance occurs in history too striking to be overlooked. By a statute of Queen Elizabeth, the importation was prohibited of cutlery from the Netherlands. This act was no sooner promulgated, than the Princess of Parma instantly prohibited in return the trade for English woollens, amounting to the annual value of one million sterling. This princess knew as well as Elizabeth, that by this prohibition she essentially injured the trade of the people under her government; but she gratified her revenge: and in truth the annals of all ages abundantly prove, that considerations of interest, are frequently overpowered by motives of resentment.

Surely

Surely the present subject is not properly understood in this kingdom, or the profitable existence of the most valuable of our remaining plantations;—the welfare of thousands and thousands of valuable subjects;—I may add the manufactures and industry, in a great degree, of the nation, would not have been thus put in hazard. That the subject is not well understood, is evident from the reasoning of many distinguished men, both in and out of parliament, who cannot be supposed to be actuated by interested or improper motives. Yet their arguments prove them to be most strangely misinformed in a matter of the highest importance. Among other positions, which have seemingly had an influence on the councils of government in this business, it has been very confidently urged

First, That if the United States shall refuse permission to British ships to carry on the trade between the West Indies and America exclusively, the planters may obtain sufficient supplies of provisions and lumber from Canada and Nova Scotia, at least with some assistance from Great Britain.

Secondly, That Great Britain being entitled to the monopoly of the produce of her own West India islands, it will be injurious to her interest, to permit a direct importation into the United States of any part thereof, in American vessels.

Thirdly, That if the Americans are allowed a free commercial intercourse with this kingdom and

and its dependencies as formerly, they will soon substantially enjoy it, to the exclusion of our own shipping, and the entire loss of our carrying trade.

Fourthly, That Ireland will have just reason to complain, if America is permitted to purchase sugar and rum cheaper than herself.

I shall consider these positions separately: but in this, as in all other commercial disquisitions, it is the first duty of a writer *to ascertain facts*. Declamation may mislead and speculative reasoning perplex, but in matters of trade, the most plausible theory, unless it be raised on the solid evidence of well authenticated facts, is built on stubble.

Lord Sheffield observes, and very truly, that the knowledge of the exports and imports of the American trade, will afford us facts and principles to ascertain its value. I shall apply this observation to the trade in question, as it actually subsisted between our islands in the West Indies and the now United States of America previous to the year 1774, in the latter end of which year, the non-importation agreement took place. I omit that year for obvious reasons. If I mistake not, the summary which I shall present to my readers will afford a full and sufficient answer to more than one of the preceding objections. The rest will give me very little trouble.

I begin with the imports. It is indeed abundantly necessary that Great Britain should be acquainted

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quainted with their nature and value, for their importance extends not merely to the preservation of fortune, but to the maintenance of life.—It was said in parliament, that they amounted to about 200,000*l.* annually, but that neither the people nor parliament of England have at present any just conception of their magnitude, may be seen from hence, that on an average of three years, previous to 1774, our several West India islands received from America (I mean from those provinces which now constitute the United States ;—the small and casual importations from Canada and Nova Scotia being unworthy particular discrimination†) an annual supply of one hundred and twenty-five thousand barrels of flour, five thousand tierces of biscuit, fourteen thousand tierces of rice, twelve thousand five hundred barrels of pork and beef; three hundred and sixty thousand bushels of Indian corn; besides beans and pease, oats, &c. but above all, as being of infinite importance towards the maintenance of the Negroes, was the article of salted fish, amounting to one hundred and fifty thousand quintals, and thirty thousand barrels*. Such were the provisions,—not matters of luxury, but plain and necessary food. Of lumber for building, such as joists, boards, planks,

* Worth in America about 120,000*l.* sterling—of the great importance of this particular supply I shall again have occasion to speak.

† From 5th July, 1782, to 5th July, 1783, only *two* small vessels from Hallifax, and *one* from Quebeck, entered at Kingston, Jamaica.

&c. (worth in the West Indies before the war about 5l. sterling per thousand); the quantity imported was twenty million one hundred and fifty thousand feet, besides twenty-one million of shingles for roofing; and of staves for hogsheds and punchcons, worth 8l. sterling per thousand, or thereabouts, the islands received twenty-one million one hundred and sixty thousand, exclusive of seventeen thousand shook hogsheds, and about a million and a half of wood hoops. To all which are to be added, frames for houses, spermaceti candles, iron, tar, turpentine and lamp oil; horses, oxen, sheep and poultry; the whole annual importation, I venture to set, on the most moderate estimate, at the sum of 750,000l. sterling money of Great Britain!

In payment of this immense supply, the Americans exported part of all the staples of our islands; but principally *rum*. And it is a circumstance deserving particular attention, that the rum of all our plantations (Jamaica and Grenada excepted) is fit only for the American market, and would seldom prove a saving remittance if shipped to Great Britain. The quantity of this article sold annually to America, on an average as above, was three million six hundred thousand gallons, amounting, at 1s. 6d. sterling per gallon, to 270,000l. sterling.

The next article of export, in point of value, was *sugar*, of which the Americans purchased about 3000 hogsheds, 1500 tierces, and 4000
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barrels yearly, worth on the spot, about 125,000l. sterling. It was chiefly the finest Muscavado intended for the scale.

With *molasses* the Americans were chiefly supplied by the French, who being checked in their distilleries by the policy of their government, could afford to sell it much cheaper than the British planters, yet in afforting their homeward cargoes, this commodity was not entirely overlooked. The quantity purchased by them in our islands annually, was stated to me at about 150,000 gallons, worth 5000l. sterling, but I suspect it is greatly under-rated.

Coffee constituted a very essential article of American consumption. The demand for it in Jamaica for the American market, was so great for some years previous to the commencement of the late war, as to occasion an increase of cultivation in the mountainous parts of that island, (especially in the vicinity of Kingston) so rapid as to excite astonishment.

The quantity shipped to North America so long ago as 1767, (since which time I have no exact account) from the port of Kingston, was 904 casks worth, I presume, on an average, 20l. each (currency). I have no doubt that this exportation was doubled, on an average of the six succeeding years; and allowing the islands to the windward (particularly Dominica and Grenada and its dependencies) to have furnished

an equal quantity with Jamaica, the whole supply in sterling money would not be short of 50,000 l. This article too would have proved a losing remittance if shipped to Great Britain. Our late ministers however very wisely and prudently reduced the duties on its importation.

The Americans purchased likewise (chiefly in Jamaica) considerable quantities of *cacao* or chocolate, and about 10,000 *mahogany planks*. These articles were obtained principally from the Spanish Main; and the Island of Cuba, in exchange for British manufactures sent from Jamaica. This was a trade formerly of infinite importance to Great Britain. till the British ministry, in 1763, through a mistaken policy, becoming custom-house officers for the King of Spain, gave it a wound which it has never thoroughly recovered. They purchased likewise, but to no great amount, *pie-mento*, *ginger*, *cotton-wool*, *fustick*, *logwood* and *lignum vitæ*. For these various articles I reckon on a loose estimate, 60,000 l.

From this state of their imports and exports, the sum of 240,000 l. sterling appears to have been the balance in favour of America, and it was paid in cash and bills of exchange. Part of which, as it is supposed, was afterwards laid out in the French islands, in the purchase of molasses and coffee; but much less I believe than is commonly imagined; for the French planters had as great occasion as our own for American lumber
and

and necessaries : and that those articles were freely admitted into their ports, I have been myself an eye-witness : that they gladly received them too, instead of money, in payment of sugar and other articles of their produce, which were afterwards conveyed (whether legally or not) into the ports of North America, there is no reason to doubt. It is therefore more than probable, that the whole, or the greatest part of the balance due and received from the planters in our own islands, was remitted by the Americans to Great Britain, in reduction of their debts to the British merchants. And such *were once* the happy effects of colonial navigation and commerce ! Though spreading through a variety of distant channels, their profits all returned to, and ultimately concentrated in, Great Britain, like rivers to the ocean, which, as philosophers tell us, supply, by unobserved operations, and through a thousand secret recesses, the springs and fountains of the earth : but these, after giving fertility and life to the remotest corners of the globe, return back with collective and augmented force, and freighted with golden treasures, to the bosom of their general parent.

In the preceding enumeration of the exports from the British West-Indies to North America, I am not clear that my statement conforms to official documents. The Custom-House books in the West-Indies, out of which those documents are formed, afford no certainty of information ;

for many of the bays, creeks, and shipping places in the islands (particularly in Jamaica) being remote from the ports of entry, it was formerly usual with the masters of American vessels loading at such places, in order to prevent delay, to make out their manifests, and take out their clearances before they were fully laden, receiving afterwards on board, notwithstanding the risques they incurred by the practice, much greater quantities of goods than they had reported. Governor Lyttelton, in a representation to the Lords of Trade, in 1764, now before me, observes, that there was not at that time *one half* of the produce entered for exportation in the Custom-House books at Jamaica, which was actually shipped.—Perhaps, therefore I may have over-rated the balance in favour of America.

I am the more inclined to suspect that government is not rightly informed in this particular of the *exports*, because Lord Sheffield, who appears to have been refused no information that office can give, speaks of them in general (the article of rum excepted) as inconsiderable and of little value.—With respect, however, to the *imports*, it is impossible but that the fullest and most correct information has been obtained; and amongst the numerous accounts collected by his lordship, it would have been a proof of his candour if he had stated also an account of the imports in question to the public,

public, and thereby have rendered this intrusion on their patience unnecessary.

In truth it is the knowledge of the magnitude of the imports from the United States (—seven hundred and fifty thousand pounds sterling laid out in such cheap and bulky commodities as provisions and lumber!—) that chiefly demonstrates the mockery of referring the disappointed planter to Canada and Nova Scotia. Even if nature had not, as unfortunately she has, shut up the navigation from the former of these provinces six months in the year, and devoted the latter to everlasting sterility; there is this plain reason in the nature of things that forbids the planter to look to those countries for effectual relief. “It is inconsistent with the nature of commerce, to furnish an adequate supply to so vast, and so various a demand; coming immediately and unexpectedly. The demand and the supply must grow up together, mutually supporting, and supported by, each other.” It will require a long series of years to bring them to a level*.

This principle applies too in a great degree, as well to England, as to our few remaining provinces in North America. I will suppose, however, that Great Britain can actually furnish the chief of those articles which the planters formerly obtained from the United States, yet it must

* See Mr. Walker's evidence before the House of Commons on the Planter's petition in 1775, wherein this remark is ably illustrated.

be remembered, that the price of them in Europe, from the advance of freight only, will at least be doubled. The freight of lumber, even from North America, a short and safe passage, is a moiety of the first cost of the goods. Nevertheless (as was well observed by a noble Earl in the House of Lords) “ it is the readiness and cheap-
 “ nefs of the navigation that supports the inter-
 “ course. From the vicinity of the American
 “ Continent and the West India islands to each
 “ other, the trade is carried on by small sloops
 “ and schooners; nay, even by half-decked boats,
 “ with two and three men, and perhaps a boy on
 “ board of each; the value of one cargo, incon-
 “ siderable as it is, being more than sufficient to
 “ pay the prime cost of the whole vessel †.”

With the advance of freight on goods purchased in Europe, (to say nothing of the augmented cost of the goods themselves) must be reckoned also the loss which the planter will sustain in the sale of his produce.—I mean in the difference he will experience between the prices he usually obtained from the American trader (who, dealing on barter and for a homeward freight, could afford to pay liberally) and those which he is likely to obtain at a glutted market, and subject to enormous duties in Great Britain.—Part of his staple commodities too, as we have shewn, if he cannot sell them to Ame-

† Lord Abingdon's Speech, July 15, 1783.

rica, must remain a dead loss on his hands.—It is, therefore, cruelty and insult to tell him of supplies in Great Britain, if he has not wherewithal to purchase them. There may be corn in Egypt, but there is no money in the sack's mouth.

Under circumstances of such accumulated distress, it is absolutely impossible that nineteen out of twenty of the planters can subsist. If it be asked, *How it came that they subsisted during the war, when all immediate intercourse with the associated provinces was cut off?* The answer is obvious. They obtained American supplies by means of the prize-vessels which were condemned and sold in their ports; and, if this resource proved deficient, the advanced price of West-India produce at the British market, enabled the planter to purchase such articles in Great Britain, as Great Britain could supply. The resource and its alternative no longer exist. And here it may not be improper to shew on what terms the planter was usually supplied at the British market with those commodities which he formerly obtained from North America.—An instance or two will suffice. Among other necessaries, *flour*, and *packages for rum*, constituted two important articles. Of the flour, a third, at least, perished before it reached its place of destination; and with regard to puncheons for containing rum, it is to be observed, that pipe-staves from the Baltick, though affording the necessary material, are not prepared for the use of the
West

West Indies; being too long for a single puncheon, and not long enough for two; neither are they properly manufactured in other respects. The planter was compelled, therefore, to purchase ready made puncheons in Great Britain; the average price of which, during the war, was about twenty shillings each *, to which add six shillings for freight, insurance, and charges, and the whole expence on delivery in the West Indies, exclusive of the iron-hoops, was 26 s. sterling.—Now the whole cost in the West Indies of the same article, prepared from American staves, was usually about 11 s. only.—Some part of this expence, however, was repaid; but it is no exaggeration to aver, that in this instance alone, trifling as it may appear, by importing their rum-packages from Great Britain instead of America, the islands sustained a loss of at least 50,000 l. sterling, per annum. From hence some judgment may be formed what little dependence, even the most opulent of the West India planters, can place on the Mother Country for the supply of necessaries. The resource itself is ruinous in the extreme.

The preceding observations have, I trust, fully obviated the first objection above stated, and anticipated in some measure an answer to the second. I most readily admit that Great Britain is of right entitled to the monopoly of the produce of her

* The price is now 18 s.

West-India possessions, as long as she continues *to them* the monopoly of her market. This reciprocal obligation I consider as founded on an implied convention, on the faith of which the sugar islands were settled; but I contend that a vent in America (though no longer a part of the British dominion) of those articles of their produce, for which the demand in Great Britain seldom affords a saving price, may very reasonably be requested.—For not tending in the smallest degree to the prejudice of the mother country, it cannot surely be considered as a breach of that convention which I have supposed to subsist between her and her children. It were indeed strange policy in a parent state to deprive her colonies of any resource, the loss of which, though an injury to them, is productive of no advantage to herself, nor can any contract warrant so extensive an interpretation. Sugar, indigo, cotton-wool, dying-woods, &c. being raw materials, for which Great Britain affords a sufficient demand, she may perhaps properly enough confine to her own market; but all or most of the remaining West-India products ought to lie under no such restriction; and I shall offer some reasons to prove, that the principal staple, *sugar*, ought to be allowed a free export to America as heretofore, even in point of true policy on the part of Great Britain.

It is incontestibly true, that if the Americans are not permitted to purchase this article from our

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own islands, they will obtain it from those of France. We are told indeed by Lord Sheffield, that "neither Holland nor France will suffer the American States to carry sugar from their ports in the West-Indies;" but unless his lordship alludes to some recent regulation of those governments of which I have not heard, he will find it difficult to reconcile this assertion with that which immediately precedes it, in the same page and in the same paragraph of his book. "The difference of price, says his lordship, between French, Danish, and Dutch, and British West-India sugar, was so great, that above two thirds of the sugar imported into America came from the foreign islands." This indeed I believe, and whether such sugar was imported clandestinely from the foreign islands, or otherwise, it is a circumstance of which Great Britain ought certainly to avail herself, by encouraging as much as possible the Americans to deal with her own sugar islands for this article among others, instead of laying out their money with the French, the Danes and the Dutch. It seems not to be sufficiently understood, that every addition to the prosperity of our sugar islands is absolutely and entirely an augmentation of the national wealth. Envy perhaps may not be willing to allow this, and ignorance may not comprehend it; but such is the fact. It is to Great Britain, and to Great Britain alone, that our West-India planters consider themselves as belonging. It is *here* that their
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children are educated; their wealth centers *here*, and it is *here* that their affections are fixed. Even such of them as have resided in the West-Indies from their birth, look on the islands as a temporary abode only, and the fond notion of being soon able *to go home* (as they emphatically term a visit to England) year after year animates their industry and alleviates their misfortunes; of which by the bye, no people on earth have received a greater share from the hand of omnipotence than themselves. On what principle then of reason or justice, are we called upon to deprive these colonies, thus attached to us by every tie of interest and affection, of any one advantage in the disposal of their produce, which is not immediately prejudicial to ourselves? Are we by mistaken prohibitions to compel their old customers the Americans, to deal with foreigners, whether they incline so to do or not? Very different was the policy of our former system; for why was a duty of five shillings per cent. levied on sugars of foreign growth, imported into North America, while that of our own islands was admitted duty free? evidently that the tax on foreign sugars might operate as a bounty on our own. This system it is true has ceased with the allegiance of America: nevertheless, if the vessels of the United States are freely admitted into our West-India ports, it is probable, in the assortment of their homeward freight, that sugar will still constitute *some part* of their cargoes. I believe

believe in truth a *small part*. But whatever may be its amount, the value of it, if sugar itself is prohibited, must be paid in ready money, which will afterwards probably find its way to those plantations where a wiser policy prevails*. It follows, therefore, and the fact undoubtedly is, that as we restrain our own sugar islands, we support and encourage, in the same degree, those of our rivals and enemies, the French.

I am not unapprised of that narrow selfish argument, that the British revenue will be injured by the export of our sugar to North America:—but judging of the future by the past, I maintain, that the plenty of sugar at the English market, as it has always kept, so it always will keep pace with the reduced price of necessaries in our sugar plantations, and the ease with which labour there, is upheld and promoted. It is not the sale of an inconsiderable portion of their great staple to the North Americans, that ultimately lessens its general export to Great Britain. On the contrary, by a reduction in the planters annual expence,—an advantage which he owes to an immediate, and therefore beneficial exchange of commodities (sugar among the rest) with America, a desire of improving and extending his possessions, urges him to new undertakings;—his ambition is awakened;—his faculties expand, and cultivation increases

* See the Second Address in the Appendix, from the inhabitants of Jamaica to Governor Campbell.

with a rapidity unknown to the cautious inhabitant of the colder clime, and less vigorous soil of Europe. Thus it is, that the islands will gratefully repay the generous indulgence of their parent. By permitting a direct exportation of sugar to America, she will soon find a proportionate encrease of the same staple, at her own emporium; while the consumption of her manufactories will enlarge with the augmentation of her navigation and revenues. The improvements that were visible in the Island of Jamaica within the short space of fifteen years, previous to the late unfortunate war, establish the truth of this reasoning beyond all contradiction. They may be judged of from this, that in 1757 the import of sugar into the port of London, from that island, was 24,494 hogsheads; in 1772, it had risen to 45,889 hogsheads! Let us now no longer be told, that an exportation of that commodity to North America is prejudicial to the revenues of Great Britain!

I come now to the loudest of all the objections that have yet been urged against the establishment of a liberal intercourse with the Americans; namely, the supposed danger of their engrossing the navigation and carrying-trade of this kingdom; on which, however, it is sufficient to observe, with respect to our sugar colonies, that the argument whereon this objection is founded, (if I rightly comprehend its meaning,) takes for granted what yet remains to be proved; since it implies, that the
admission

admission of American vessels into our West India ports allows them also *a free trade from thence to Great Britain*. But assuredly this does not necessarily follow. Whether it may be prudent in Great Britain to consent to so liberal an extension of her navigation laws, is a question of general policy, whereon it would be presumptuous in the West India planters to offer their opinion. Impressed with the dread of impending evils, they confine themselves to their own particular situation, requesting only, that America may be permitted, as formerly, to bring them food, and such other necessities as Great Britain herself cannot furnish, and to receive in payment such of their staples as Great Britain cannot consume. They are told that "Canada and Nova Scotia shall satisfy their wants." We have demonstrated the folly of this expectation. "But Great Britain claims the monopoly of their produce." It has been shewn that she will still possess it to every beneficial purpose. Obstacles, however, multiply. "The Americans will engross the carrying-trade, to the exclusion of our own shipping."—This objection, in truth, is expressed in such general terms, that I really believe, many well meaning men, who have grown hoarse in repeating it, have no precise idea of its meaning to this hour. If the sense of it be this, *that American ships will supply foreign markets with British plantation sugar, to the prejudice of the British refinery*; the noble author of whom I have made

made frequent mention, and who has clearly given it this interpretation, has himself furnished an answer; for he repeatedly affirms, that the French islands can supply, not only the American consumption, but that of all Europe besides, on far cheaper terms than our own. Does the noble Lord suppose, that America will buy *dearer*, with a view to sell *cheaper*, than the French? Their past conduct has afforded no proofs of such egregious folly. I must observe too, that our islands have already permission (by 12 Geo. II.) to send sugars to the southward of Cape Finistere; yet, during a residence of 15 years in the West Indies, I never heard but of two vessels that tried the experiment, and the owners had no encouragement to repeat it. If the objection signifies, what I believe it was meant to signify by some who urged it in the House of Commons in the debate of Mr. Pitt's provisional bill; namely, *That American ships, having discharged their cargoes in our West India islands, will enter into a Competition with British vessels loading there, for freights to Great Britain*; it is, I confess, a matter deserving consideration; but Great Britain surely may administer a *preventive* less dangerous in its effects than the project of starving her sugar colonies, by interdicting all intercourse whatever between them and the United States. The disease, in this case, is, indeed, by far the lesser evil.

I hope

I hope that no apology to Lord Sheffield will be thought necessary for the freedom I have taken with his opinions. I mean no personal offence; for I have heard, and believe, that he is a man of great liberality and humanity; but, drawing his conclusions, as he confesses to have done, chiefly from oral testimony, I am inclined to think, that great part of the information given to his lordship, was not given in the spirit of truth; but, in that of selfishness and malignity. His lordship, having submitted his opinions to the public, avowedly for the purpose of influencing public measures, they are fairly an object of public investigation.

One objection still remains to be considered. It is that which respects Ireland. It shall quickly be dispatched; for it is without even a shadow of foundation. Ireland has already received, as matter of right, all the freedom of trade which she claimed, or can reasonably desire, and she nobly earned it.—Happy, if she knows her own happiness! Among other privileges, she possesses that of a direct intercourse with our West India islands. It is true, she has charged the consumption of West-India produce with duties proportionate to those which are laid by Great-Britain; and she has adopted our navigation act, in prohibiting the introduction thereof from foreign plantations in foreign bottoms. This she did at the reasonable request of this kingdom; for it was obvious, that a system of smuggling sugar and rum from thence hither, would other-

otherwise have been introduced that must have proved fatal to our revenues : but the duties which Ireland has thus established, she retains in her own hands. Great-Britain receives no part of them ; and if by means of *these*, the people of Ireland are relieved of *other* taxes, how are they injured, and what have they to complain of ? When therefore they are told, " That they ought to have West-India produce on as good terms as the Americans, now a foreign nation," the fact itself is not fairly stated. It is necessary to observe too, that England is no longer at the expence of maintaining a fleet for the protection of the commerce of America. Does Ireland expect that Great-Britain is to support the whole burthen of naval defence for both kingdoms, besides the load of debt contracted for both, and will the people of Ireland contribute in no respect to her relief ? Men who have acted so bravely as the Irish, will not argue so ungenerously.

I have thus briefly, but I trust satisfactorily, obviated the principal objections and arguments that have been eloquently urged, both in parliament and from the press, against the revival of a commercial intercourse between our West-India islands and the United States of America, on terms of equal freedom and advantage. It has cost me but little trouble, for none of them were of deep and difficult consideration, and the subject did not require me to enter more fully and at large into that great system of general policy, which it will speedily

demand the closest investigation on the part of Great-Britain (aided by temperate councils, uncontaminated by party, and unbiassed by resentment) to arrange and establish on a solid and prosperous footing. Of that general system, however, the commerce of which I treat, constitutes a very essential part, and by considering it separately and distinctly, I flatter myself that I have enabled the reader to form a clearer notion of its nature, and a more accurate estimate of its value, than otherwise he might have done. With a few miscellaneous observations, therefore, that occur to me, I shall dismiss the subject.

It has been remarked, that the navigation from Canada is obstructed six months in the year by the ice. It should also have been observed, that the hurricane months in the West-Indies occupy great part of the time in which the river St. Lawrence is open. How casual, how uncertain, therefore, must be any supply from thence for the use of the planters in the West-Indies, even if Canada had people sufficient to cut her lumber, and the means of preparing her wheat into flour fit for the West-India market, neither of which advantages she possesses at present. I doubt also, whether Canada (as now bounded) furnishes that species of wood called *white oak*; the only material proper for containing rum. It is certain, that Nova-Scotia does not. This is a very striking circumstance; for next to the necessaries of life, *wood*, of which
rum

rum puncheons are made, is the most important of supplies to the West-Indies, as I have already demonstrated, and the want of it affords an additional reason for placing very little dependance on either of those ill-fated provinces*.

The papers, which I shall subjoin in an Appendix, have anticipated in part an observation wherein our humanity, as well as policy, is more interested than in any other. It arises from the dreadful conflagration which a few years ago reduced the large and opulent emporium of Jamaica to ashes, and the still more dreadful hurricanes, in which the angel of desolation visited in his wrath great part of that extensive country, and the whole of some of the islands to windward.—Ever since those calamities, the suffering inhabitants have resided in miserable hovels, by no means a sufficient defence against the autumnal seasons, in confident expectation that the return of peace would enable them to procure materials for repairing their dwelling houses, and the re-establishment of their mills and manufactories; and accordingly America, in the very first moment of reconciliation, hastened to their relief. How grievous then is their disappointment! yet this is but a very small part of the evil. It has been shewn in the state of the

* *Beech* from England has served to make sugar hogheads, but will not answer for rum; nor any wood that I am acquainted with but *oak*.

imports

imports from North-America, that the article of salted fish (viz. cod, mackrell and shad) to the incredible amount of 150,000 quintals, and 30,000 barrels, constituted part of their annual consumption. It grieves me to say, that this, and herrings from Ireland, made the only animal food of the poor negroes. By the late proclamation, the future import of salted fish from the United States is not permitted *even in British vessels*. As it is impossible that Ireland alone, or conjointly with the fisheries of St. John's and Nova Scotia, in their present state, can supply the deficiency, infatuation must have crept into our councils. Is it not enough that ruin will overtake the unoffending planter;—must the most wretched of all the children of affliction, his miserable slaves, also fall victims to our vengeance?

It was remarked, by Mr. Walker, in that admirable chain of evidence delivered by him, in 1775, to an unattending and unfeeling House of Commons, that “it is in trade, as in the human body, nothing suffers singly by itself; there is a consent of parts in the system of both, and the partial evil soon grows into universal mischief.”—At present I shall confine the application of this remark to the African trade. Deprived of the means of procuring sustenance for the slaves they already possess, it can hardly be supposed that the planters will think of purchasing others. In lamenting this circumstance, I speak
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now, merely as a merchant or stockholder, meditating on the present, and probably future, stability of the revenues of Great Britain; to which the African trade is doubtless of considerable importance. As a man, and a Christian, I hope I shall live to see the day (though a sugar planter myself) when this abominable traffic will be prohibited. I think I can clearly prove, that even the welfare of the planter concurs with the honor of government, and the interest of humanity, in wishing its total abolition. At present, the system of Great Britain towards her few remaining colonies, is a system unexampled in the annals of mankind.—It is war, under the name of peace, against the most valuable of her plantations, who have not only given her no provocation, but whose welfare she knows and acknowledges to be the support of our own empire. Well, therefore, may the planters complain, that “they are suffering without blame, and incurring all the effects of resentment, without the slightest imputation on their obedience *.”

Whatever may be thought of the past or present conduct of America towards this country, the peaceful and loyal inhabitants of the West India islands are void of offence. Is it then consistent with policy, religion, or humanity, to destroy the innocent, because their destruction may operate

* Petition from the assembly of Barbadoes to the King.

eventually

eventually as a punishment to the guilty ; and are 500,000 persons to be starved, and a property of 60 million to be rendered unprofitable and precarious, that America may lose the advantage of selling them food and necessaries ? Policy, religion, and humanity, reprobate the idea !

To conclude : In private life, it is not the man who is injured ; but he that gives the injury, that seldom forgives. This, however, is the peculiar characteristic of base and ignoble minds ; for such only are guilty of unprovoked and premeditated mischief. Mistake, indeed, is the lot of our nature, and the wisest and greatest of men are not exempted from it ; but conviction on such minds produces, not malignity or revenge, but acknowledgment and reparation. When unretracted error hardens into obstinacy, and disappointed ambition is degraded into malice—these are signs of a fatal degeneracy ; of a conduct not merely erroneous, but proceeding from principles depraved and corrupt. It is with communities as with individuals. We were once a people renowned for generosity and magnanimity.—To the preservation of that character, exemption from error never was supposed immutably necessary. Our public conduct has indeed been dreadfully fallible, and we have much to answer for, and much to repair :—but, if public virtue be not wholly gone from us, if we still wish to be venerable among the nations of the earth, let us, above all things, discard, in
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the fulness of disdain, that low vindictive principle of womanly resentment, which incites to secret malignity and revenge, when open and avowed hostility has failed of its purpose. Surely we are at this time sufficiently humbled, both in our own eyes and that of the world, to learn a lesson from the school of affliction. If misfortunes like ours, will not teach us wisdom, we are indeed a devoted people, and fate has fixed her seal upon our ruin!

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A P P E N D I X.

At a Committee of the West-India Planters and Merchants, held the 11th of April, 1783, in pursuance of the unanimous resolution and appointment of a general meeting expressly called for that purpose:

RESOLVED unanimously, that the following REPRESENTATION be made to his MAJESTY'S Ministers, viz.

THAT the proprietors of Estates in the sugar colonies have been put to such enormous expences for their defence during the late war, and for procuring even the insufficient supplies they have been able to obtain of lumber and other American produce, and have been during the same period visited with so many natural calamities, that their situation is become truly distressful, and loudly calls for attention to every possible means of supporting them, and, with them the

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manufactures, commerce, navigation, and revenue of the mother country, under burthens which endanger their utter ruin.

It is with the greatest reluctance they make any representation concerning the very heavy and oppressive duties imposed on the staple articles of their produce by Parliament, being truly sensible of the urgency of the public necessities, and sincerely ready to make every exertion for supporting their share of them; but if such duties are imposed as must greatly lessen the consumption, whilst they proportionably increase the temptation to smuggling, the prospect of revenue will be defeated, and the sugar colonies ruined in vain. Such it is greatly feared will be the operation of the increased duties upon sugar and rum. Those on rum have operated in a great measure as a prohibition to the importation from the Leeward Islands. Those on sugar have been nearly doubled in the course of the last war; and, considering that the greatest part of the sugar is refined before consumption, the duties thereon are duties upon a raw material of manufacture, falling vastly heavier upon the substance consumed, because of the great waste in refining. The advance of money required for payment of the duty instantly on landing aggravates its weight upon the planter; and upon the whole, it is apprehended that no similar object of taxation has, under the pressure of the same public necessities, been dealt with so hardly;

hardly; whilst few, if any of them from their connection with the most essential interests of this commercial country, stand so well entitled to a favourable attention. A relief from these duties may therefore become indispensably necessary; and such necessity can in the opinion of the committee be in no way prevented, but by the utmost assistance being given, to the supply of the sugar colonies with the articles they stand in need of; and to the encouragement of the cultivation of other articles of their growth; together with the most vigorous exertion of every means whereby smuggling may be prevented, and foreign produce kept from being introduced to consumption in these kingdoms instead of our own.

The dominions of the United States of America, and his Majesty's sugar colonies, having been settled in the express view of supplying each others wants, it cannot be expected that the sugar colonies can subsist, in any degree of prosperity, without those supplies of lumber and provisions from America at the cheapest rate, in contemplation of which they were so settled, or without the consumption in North America of their produce in return; and, although the exclusive right to that consumption is no more, yet, under a just and reasonable attention to mutual interests, the committee entertain no doubt but such a share of the American trade may be preserved to the sugar colonies as will greatly tend to their support, and,
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upon every principle of true policy, and proper regard to the views and purposes of rival nations, be highly deserving of the utmost countenance and assistance from the mother country. To this intercourse, the committee apprehend, the permission of American ships, as heretofore, freely to bring the produce of the dominions of the United States to the sugar colonies, and take back our produce in return, is so obviously essential, that they need not adduce any farther arguments in support of that proposition.

In several of his Majesty's sugar colonies there are still great tracts of uncultivated land, of which, although a considerable part, would undoubtedly, under adequate encouragement, be settled with sugar works, yet there will remain considerable quantities which, from soil or situation, are unfit for the culture of sugar, though very fit for that of indigo, coffee, cocoa, and tobacco, if proper encouragement were given thereto; and such cultivation would at the same time afford the means of subsistence to great numbers of loyal Americans and others, whose property is not sufficient for the settlement of a sugar plantation, and would greatly increase the internal strength of the sugar colonies. For these salutary purposes, it is submitted whether the bounty of 4d. per pound, which only expired last year, should not be revived, upon the importation of indigo of the growth of his Majesty's sugar colonies, and the duties on
coffee

coffee and cocoa be in a great measure taken off. Those on coffee, in particular, operate almost as a prohibition on the legal consumption, seeing that, notwithstanding their enormous rate, they only produce about 7 or 8000*l.* per annum to the revenue, whilst it is evident that very great quantities of coffee are consumed in these kingdoms, to the encouragement of the general practice of smuggling, and the support of the French West-India Islands by the consumption of their produce. By an experiment upon this article, therefore, the revenue can hazard little, and the committee most earnestly recommend it, in the firm persuasion that if the excise were wholly taken off, and that, upon payment of a moderate duty of customs upon landing, to be drawn back on exportation, coffee were permitted to be consumed free from all farther restraint, a very small duty thereon would not only produce more revenue than is produced at present from the commodity itself, but, would materially aid the consumption of sugar, and the revenue arising therefrom. A similar regulation of the duty on cocoa would, it is hoped, produce the like effects.

Among the defects of the present system of laws against smuggling, it is submitted whether some of the most striking and considerable are not, the permitting vessels seized to return to their former employment; the want of punishments suited to the enormity of the crime, to be inflicted on such

such revenue officers as are either corruptly concerned in smuggling or in collusive seizures, or wilfully and knowingly connive at them; and the permitting commodities seized to be sold for home consumption free of duty. Under this practice, every attempt made to smuggle, must of necessity produce all the evil to the state, which its success could produce; and the only question is, whether the smuggler or the custom house officer shall reap the benefit; for by the one or the other of them the commodity is with certainty brought into consumption, free of duty, whilst the sale thereof upon the sea coast at the same time, affords the means of covering, by permits, the fraudulent conveyance of vastly greater quantities of smuggled goods than could be so covered if those sales did not afford the pretence. It is therefore conceived, that the abolition of this practice, and the sale of all seizures for exportation only, under the usual securities, is become essential to the support of our own colonies, under the load of duties with which the consumption of their produce in these kingdoms is burthened.

Every delay, arising from the forms of the custom-house, and the limitations of the space in which business is required to be done, increases the opportunities, not only of defrauding the revenue by smuggling, but robbing the importer by pilfering the commodity on which the duty is payable. In this view, as well as in many others, it

it would be highly salutary, to abolish holidays at the custom-house to the degree that they stand abolished at the treasury, admiralty, navy-office, and other great efficient boards of business; to consolidate the several perplexed and intricate branches of duties and drawbacks into one duty and one drawback on each commodity; and to extend the public quays of London, and no longer require the commerce of the metropolis to be carried on in less space than is allowed at the principal out-ports, and in so crowded a way, as wholly precludes an effectual care of the commodities imported, and encourages villany of all denominations among the labouring people employed about them. And on all these topics the Committee beg leave to observe, that the interests of government, and of the planter and fair trader, fully coincide, and no regulation can serve the one without protecting the other.

The Committee farther beg leave to represent, that the tares, allowed at the custom-house on sugars imported, require revision, being less than the real weight of the packages.

Under all the circumstances herein before set forth, the West-India planters and merchants deem it their indispensable duty to make this representation to his Majesty's ministers; and in the most earnest manner to entreat, that their true situation may be submitted to his Majesty, and that, on due consideration thereof, such measures
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may be suggested, and pursued, as shall appear best calculated to promote purposes so essential to the general welfare.

JAMAICA, ff } May 30, 1783.
SAINT JAGO DE LA VEGA.

To his Excellency ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL, Esquire, Captain-General, Governor and Commander in Chief, in and over this his Majesty's Island of Jamaica, and other the Territories thereon depending in America, Chancellor and Vice-Admiral of the same,

The Humble Address of the Grand Inquest
of the County of MIDDLESEX.

WE his Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the Grand Inquest of the County of Middlesex, beg leave to address your excellency, with sentiments expressive of the sincerest satisfaction, on the prospect of security and extensive commerce, those natural consequences of the inestimable blessing of peace.

We have every well-grounded hope, that a peace, which is professed to be established upon the liberal principles of equity and reciprocity, will be permanent, and universally beneficial.

We are induced, from the highest authority, to expect that a mutual and satisfactory intercourse,
between

between the empire of Great Britain and the United States of America, will be established on the broadest basis; and we cannot but flatter ourselves that we shall be speedily relieved from those distresses, to which our local situation has more peculiarly exposed us, in addition to the burthen and expences of repeated martial laws, and encreasing taxes, during the course of the late war. It is within your Excellency's recollection that the town of Kingston has been in a great measure destroyed by a tremendous conflagration; that the whole colony was injured, and the Leeward parishes nearly desolated, by two most fatal hurricanes—From the scarcity of lumber, and other necessaries, many valuable warehouses and stores of the most respectable merchants; the works and other buildings of the useful and industrious sugar planters, have remained to this hour in a state of ruin, or (for the mere purpose of present exigency) have undergone a partial and temporary repair. With the most heartfelt satisfaction, we have seen the earliest disposition, on the parts of the Americans, to supply us with those articles which we most required, on which the existence of our sugar-works much depend, and which no quarter of the globe can afford with equal dispatch, certainty, and abundance. We cannot but hope, sir, that a branch of commerce, so beneficial to the subjects of the British empire, will not be impeded, or in any respect obstructed, in its commencement in

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this country, where it ought to be more especially encouraged. We cannot, sir, repress our uneasiness, at being informed that this intercourse is threatened with a check, in its very infancy, from difficulties arising in clearing out American vessels. We implore your Excellency's interference to remove any delays or impediment that may have arisen; and that you will be pleased to direct, that every encouragement and dispatch may be afforded to the citizens and vessels of the United States of America: we shall otherwise see, with a regret bordering upon despair, the trade of that continent directed into the channel of our natural enemies, and the enlivening gleam of returning conciliation and federal union obscured perhaps forever! Thus, sir, we submit to you, that every principle of policy and humanity operate in support of this application; and we entertain but little doubt that the intercourse bill, now depending in the British parliament, will warrant your Excellency in granting our petition in its utmost extent. We cannot conclude without assuring your Excellency, that we apply with the more confidence upon this occasion, to a governor, who, (it is but justice to acknowledge) has ever, in the course of his administration, through a long period of accumulated difficulties and distresses, created a general respect from a generous, disinterested line of conduct; and impressed an universal consciousness of a perfect disposition to promote every measure that

that might most effectually ensure the welfare and interest of the colony he presides over.

HIS EXCELLENCY'S ANSWER.

Gentlemen,

I RECEIVE your address with much satisfaction, and sincerely congratulate you on the peace; an event interesting to humanity, and from which I hope this island will reap the most salutary advantages.

Convinced that a mutual and happy intercourse between the British empire and the United States of America, would soon be established on the most liberal principles, and be productive of beneficial consequences to the merchants and planters of Jamaica, I had anticipated your wishes as early as the 10th of April, by directing the officers of his Majesty's customs at Kingston, to give every encouragement to American vessels entering the ports of this island; and for the more effectual support of these instructions, I summoned the Council to meet on the 3d of this month, persuaded that they will unite with me, in adopting some temporary expedient to remove the obstructions that are in the way of our trade with the United States of America, until full authority is received from England.

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My warmest acknowledgments are due to you for the very favourable opinion you are pleased to express of my conduct in this government, at a very interesting period of the war; the difficulties of which were, however, greatly lessened by the liberal support I experienced from the gentlemen of the island.

Having no wish separate from the welfare of this community, I shall sincerely rejoice in every opportunity of promoting the prosperity of it to the utmost of my power.

*To his Excellency ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL, Esquire,
Captain General and Governor of this his Majesty's
Island, Chancellor and Vice Admiral of the same,
&c.*

The Memorial of the Custos, Magistrates, and In-
habitants of the Town of Kingston.

Humbly sheweth,

THAT since the conclusion of Peace, several vessels from the Independent States of America have entered this port, with cargoes peculiarly adapted to give relief against the accumulated distress and inconveniencies, in which war, storms, floods, fire, and other public calamities, have involved not only the inhabitants of this town, but the Island at large.

That notwithstanding these vessels have been suffered by the officers of the customs to enter and discharge their cargoes, yet their not having received from his Majesty's ministers instructions on the business of clearing them out with such produce as they wish to take in return, they are detained,

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That one vessel is now actually loaded with the produce of this island, which, if not permitted to clear out, must be relanded, and money given in its place. Your Memorialists aver, that a longer delay will operate unfavourably in the re-establishing an intercourse between this island and America; and your Memorialists are firmly of opinion, that the prosperity of this island much depends on a free and open trade with that country.

Your Memorialists therefore humbly pray your Excellency to give such relief in the premises as the case requires.

HIS EXCELLENCY'S ANSWER.

Gentlemen,

I HAVE great pleasure in receiving your address.

The happy consequences that must result to the British Empire at large, and to this island in particular, from the encouragement of trade with the United States of North America, upon the most liberal and extensive footing, were so evident, that I had, as early as the 10th of April, directed the officers of his Majesty's Customs in Kingston, not to throw any unnecessary obstruction in the way of such commerce, but on the contrary, to afford it every possible encouragement.

To

To give more effect to those instructions, and that our intercourse with the American States should not meet with any unnecessary check in its infancy, I summoned his Majesty's Council to meet this day, in full persuasion that those gentlemen will chearfully co-operate with me in adopting proper measures to remove, as far as may be, the difficulties which may occur in the way of this trade, until we receive from England such regulations as may be established by the British Parliament.

T H E E N D.



